1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

many rooms and consequently they cannot maintain strict decency in living with their wives when the children grow up."[1] But the phenomenon is too widespread and is linked with too many factors to really bear this explanation. The house for the boys is as a rule the village guest house as well and at its centre there is a pole which is sometimes carved and differs in this respect only from other homes. The girls usually sleep with an elderly widow in another portion of the village. In some places it is reported that the boys and girls sleep together huddled "higgledy-piggledy."[2] We found no trace of these conditions among the Kols, though they may exist among those who live in close contact with other tribes who practice such customs. When Kols were asked how they managed to get along with one room and many children they replied that somehow they could tuck them all in. The absence of separate quarters strengthens the family tie and helps to make it a more stable and important unit. There was also no trace of sexual segregation, such as the separating of the husband and the wife, which would also tend to weaken the family.

1 Majumdar, D. G., *The Aborigines of Central India*, p. 80.
2 *Census of India*, 1931, xiii, i, p. 415.

1;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

for this village exogamy is that originally members of one and the same clan (*gotra* or *gotar*) lived together, as the traditions of the Dudh and Dhelki sections definitely testify, and as is still the case in many Hill Kharia settlements."[1] The Kols themselves offer other explanations for this type of exogamy, but the idea of the oneness of the village lies at the back of certain of their reasons. Some said that the children of a village living, as they do, like brothers and sisters makes any thought of such unions repugnant. A similar reason was implied in the response that the boys and girls know each other too well and such a condition would not be conducive to the future marriage relationships. It was also asserted that the presence of parents-in-law was not desirable in the same village, for if the bride was ever beaten by her husband (and it was thought that this was inevitable) her parents might be very angry and a serious quarrel with much trouble between the families was sure to result. Therefore it was considered best to get a girl from another village, and the further the village, the better the chances of avoiding such parent-in-law conflicts. Near Katni they claimed that they often got their girls from the Jubbulpore section, and that they sometimes had gone as far as Assam, where Kols have gone to work in the tea gardens.

As remarked earlier, no trace of a clan exogamy could be found among the Kols of to-day, nor an exogamy based on god-septs as among the Gonds,[2] where marriage is not possible between clans with the same number of gods. A family having three gods may marry into another with the same gods or into another with other and a different number of gods.

MARRIAGE LIMITATIONS. There is, however, a clear line limiting the choice of either the bride or the bridegroom. It is based on kinship, for as long as relationship is remembered no marriage should take place. No trace was found of the cross-cousin marriage nor of the ancient Munda custom of marrying a grandfather to a granddaughter.[3] No distinctions are made between cousins. The Kols also possess that which Lowie calls the "incest horror."[4] Children of siblings are brothers and sisters and between them marriage is considered impossible. The levirate, in which the younger brother may be expected to take the wife of a deceased elder brother, is acknowledged. There is, however, no necessity for his doing this, and public opinion does not enforce it; yet in a real sense he is responsible for her welfare and

1 Roy, S. C., *The Kharias*, p. 224.
2 Grigson, W. V., *The Maria Gonds of Bastar*, pp. 194, 195, 228.
3 Ghurye, G. S., *Caste and Race in India*, p. 117.
4 Lowie, R. H., *Primitive Society*, pp. 18, 16.

1:Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

him verbally (give *gali*), take all kinds of liberties with him and try their best to make him lose his temper. He is supposed to take no notice of this but to remain calmly at his work. After the *lawa* is prepared (the man does not prepare all that is required) it is put into a new *ghara* decorated with pictures representing females. Sometimes other articles are also put into the *ghara* —uncooked rice, bits of *supari* nut, *haldi* and two-pice coins. When prepared at the bride-groom's house the *lawa* is kept to be taken with the boy's party on their trip to the girl's village for the *sadi* and is there mixed with the *lawa* prepared in the girl's house for use at the time of the wedding. The preparation of the *lawa*, which is made a day or two before the group leaves for the wedding, is made the occasion for the reconciliation of estranged relatives within the village and the consequent restoration of friendship. This reconciliation may also be extended to any member of the *kurhi* with whom there have been unhappy relations.

(*b*) *Marriage Booth: Marhwa.* In the meantime there has been far more to do at the girl's house where the actual wedding is to take place, for the wedding booth (*marhwa* or *mandap*) must be constructed there. This is usually set up in the courtyard immediately in front of the girl's house. In this booth the essentials of the marriage ceremony are performed and the sacred pole is fixed at its centre. Male relatives of the bridegroom help to build it, but women must have nothing to do with its construction. Before the men who come to work can actually start operations the bridegroom must have his body rubbed with *til* oil mixed with *haldi*. The anointing should be done by his sister or another close female relative and he should then be dressed in clothes which have been dipped in *haldi* water. The construction of the *marhwa* may now begin.

The *marhwa* is constructed of prescribed kinds of wood. Its size varies, but is usually about eight feet square and six to seven feet high. Nine poles are used in its construction, including the central post, called the *magrohan*, which however does not reach up to the roof. *Saleh* (*Boswellia serrata*) is the most favoured kind of wood and if procurable is preferred, both for the framework of the booth and for the sacred pole at its centre. The eight remaining poles are arranged so that there are three on a side. Text figure 21 will make this clear.[1] If *saleh* wood is not available, *gular* (*Ficus glomerata*), *sal* (*Sheora robusta*), *char* (*Buchanania latifola*) or even bamboo are permissible. The central post, however, must be of *saleh* wood and they search far and wide until they have found it. The leaves of the banana plant are tied to each of the eight poles and over the top. The

[1] [on p. 86. - Analyst]

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1. *Barela*: *Persons reported*: *Houses reporting*: *Total for class.*

9	..	1	..	9
8	..	2	..	16
7	..	1	..	7
6	..	5	..	30
5	..	10	..	50
4	..	8	..	32
3	..	16	..	48
2	..	12	..	24
1	..	4	..	4
		59	..	220

2. *Kharara Ghat*:

9	..	2	..	18
8	..	..	..	..
7	..	2	..	14
6	..	5	..	30
5	..	6	..	30
4	..	6	..	24
3	..	4	..	12
2	..	4	..	8
		29	..	136

In the case of the Barela Kols the lower average is due to two causes: the first is that the town is near the main road and as the Kols are much more Hinduized as a community there is a natural loss of household members who leave home for work in Jubbulpore. The second is that the health of the Barela Kols is far less satisfactory than of those in Kharara Ghat, for the town is much more open to infection, and illnesses are more numerous.

THE POSITION OF WOMEN. The place of women among the Kols can be said to be fairly high. There is a wholesome sense of equality among the sexes. The women do not keep themselves in seclusion (*parda*), and are generally free to go about on any errand. In Hinduized sections they cover their heads in the presence of men or when they are outside their houses, but under primitive conditions they are not so particular. In a general sense the husband is the main authority

l;Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

is the family, but the wife is in no sense his slave and plays a large part in its control and management. All affairs are brought before the family for discussion and decision before final action is taken. If one party is not agreeable to a certain proposition the other tries by coaxing or by some other means to win his or her consent. Nevertheless this picture, given by the men, may be over bright, for it appears from close observation that the rights of the wives are much less than those of the men. She is not as free as the men are and it is not the custom for her to go here or there without hindrance. The woman has a certain amount of what might be called "personal property" and is not debarred from possessing it, though this is limited to her ornaments, her clothes and anything that she may make or acquire for her personal use. When the husband dies his property goes to the sons, but as long as she is living she must be supported by the sons. If there is no son, the property remains with her as long as she lives, but passes to the husband's male relatives at her death.

The Kol widow is not subjected to the same disabilities as are found among certain classes of Hindus. She is not required to shave her head, nor discard her metal bangles and ornaments, nor wear a white *sari*. If young she may marry again, usually not less than a year after her husband's death, and if she is elderly she may go to live with her son or relatives. Widows are expected to make some contribution for their keep and are often found searching for fuel or roots and leaves.

PLACE OF THE WIFE. After marriage the chief duties of the wife are to care for the house, prepare the meals and be a mother to her children. In between it is generally expected that she will find some means to supplement the family income, either by directly engaging in remunerative work, or by gathering roots and tubers from the jungle, cow dung from the roads and paths, or wood for the kitchen fire. Dried cow dung cakes are most generally used for the fire. She does the washing of clothes for herself and her children. Men wash their own clothes.

During her monthly courses there is some interruption of her regular work. During that time she may prepare her own food, but is not permitted to prepare food for another. The man must do his own cooking or make some other arrangements for the time being. There are other taboos at this time; she must never touch men's clothes nor should milk of any kind be touched by her. She may bring water from the well for her own use, but such water is taboo to any other member of the family.

li Griffiths M-5 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

562 There are at least two other things which a Kol woman must never do: she may not plough, nor climb up on the roof of a house. 543 Such matters are looked upon as serious breaches of custom and deserve 784 a penalty from the *panch*. Repeated enquiries elicited no recent 241 violations of these taboos, and there was no definite statement as to 48| what would be done in case they occurred. This latter taboo, however, probably has its exceptions, as we knew of a Kol woman helping to repair a roof on the mission house in Barela.

551 It is the rule that wives should never utter their husband's name 543 and the same is true of the husband who should never call his wife by her name. They are addressed, rather, as the mother or father of the children. For example if the child's name is Makkhi the husband will address his wife as Makkhi's mother. There is another general pro- [561] hibition to the effect that a woman should never speak the name of a man older than herself; he should be addressed in some indirect way.

847 PARENTS AND CHILDREN. Kols say that children are Bhagawan's 858 gifts to them in answer to Sheori's prayer. Both sexes are welcome 842 in the home and there is no evidence that they favour one above the other. Abortion is all but unknown and it is considered an evil thing to attempt it. Apparently they know of no herb or plant growing in the jungle which would cause it.

868 When children are old enough they are assigned tasks about the house (there is no school besides this)—the girls learn cooking and other household duties, gather wood and cow dung, while the boys help herd goats or cattle, if any, or accompany their fathers to the fields where they play about and help to bring back its produce or the wood cut in the forest.

867 Almost no moral training, as such, is imparted, nor are the children [861] severely punished when discipline is called for. A slap over the ear is usually all that is attempted and more often than not this is adroitly dodged. On the whole Kol parents are over indulgent with their children. The sum of moral training was said to be "Don't steal, don't lie, don't hurt anyone." When they were asked about the type of religious instruction given to children they said: "We neither know, nor can we tell." What children learn is largely by observation and practice rather than by direct instruction. Among the more literate people of Northern India moral teaching is given through the reading of such literature as the Ramayana of Tulsi Das. The Kols, though, do not have even this, unless it so happens that a mendicant reads to them, nevertheless it would not appear that their morals are any worse than those who have considerable more light to guide them.

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574 There is no claim of hospitality by a Kol on another Kol if he is unknown to the latter. Even though he be of the same *kurhi* and knows relatives of the persons in the family and is in need of hospitality, he can expect none; any kindness shown him is an act of mercy. For this reason it is unusual for a Kol to ask hospitality at the hands of strangers. He asks for hospitality and shelter for the night only where he is known.

421 PROPERTY AND INHERITANCE. The average Kol does not own a great deal of property, but like most people he is interested in acquiring goods. Even marriage is commonly looked upon as the acquiring of a piece of property in the person of the wife. Almost nowhere are Kols 423 found to own land in the full sense of the term. Even the land upon [427] which their houses and rude huts are built is rented, the usual rent being one rupee a year. This is paid to the *malguzar* who does not disturb them further if the payments are regular. Away from the larger towns where land so often lies waste, it is usually found that no charges are made whatsoever.

422 The personal property held by Kols includes clothes, cooking utensils, tools and a few ornaments if there is money to buy such. Animals are also considered their own property. Apart from the clothes a person wears, the rest of the goods held by the Kols are con- [425 sidered as held by the family as a unit, and the head of the family can 593] sell or exchange only after consultation with the others. Upon the approach of his death the head of the family is expected to make a 763 statement concerning the disposition and division of the property. 428 However if he should suddenly die without making such provision, it does not follow that the elder son, or next in line, inherits the rights of the father concerning the disposition of the goods, and any division or exchange must be decided upon by the family as a whole with the 421 help of someone from the *panch*. While it appears that any member of 425 the family might purchase any article required, either for themselves or for the family, yet after purchase the article becomes the property of the family as a whole, and the purchaser has no right to resell or dispose of it without permission of the head of the family in consultation with the other members.

428 Upon the break-up of the family by death the sons are generally 763 supposed to have equal rights to the property. If, prior to his death, the deceased requested that the elder son should get the larger share, this is accepted. No distinction is said to be made between the children of the "married" wife and the "kept" woman if there are both in the family.

1:Griffiths M-3 (ca. 1940) 1946 AW37 Kol AW37

Chapter XII

LIFE STORIES OF LIVING KOLS

Sunnulal: A Kol who Stayed in his Village

I was born in the village of Kharara Ghat and was the youngest of five brothers. [159] There were also three sisters in my family, which was a large one, as there are about fifty living relatives on my father's side alone. [162] When I was about sixteen years of age my parents decided that I should be married and they found a girl for me in the village of Barela. [582] My wife and I have lived happily together, and we have had two sons. My father died two years ago (in 1935). I have never had to leave Kharara Ghat in order to earn money. I have always seemed to be able to find things to do about the village and have earned enough to be well supplied with the things I need. One thing I do is [482] to go into the forest and cut wood which I carry on my head to Jubbulpore. It is hard work, but it has to be done. My wife and sons also help out by gathering *tendu* leaves for the *biri* manufacturers. All of my five brothers live here in Barela. Together we control about [427] fifteen acres of land which is rented from a *malguzar*. It is not all in one place, but in three or four places. We all do our share of work [593] on this, and the income from the wheat and pulse is shared evenly by us. But all the money I make from selling wood, or grass, or *tendu* leaves I keep myself and we do not share it.

I have become one of the *panchayat* of this village and take a keen interest in the welfare of this village and our community. I would like you to put a school in our village. The nearest school is [87] four miles away—too far for our small children to go even if we were sure they would be treated right if they were admitted. I can read a little and sign my name. [212] I never went to school, but learned this from a man in Jubbulpore, who used to teach me after I had sold my wood. I even have bought some books.

I have no debts and do not drink any strong liquors. I have never been seriously ill, nor had any serious trouble in the family, nor have we suffered from the want of food and clothing. I have never had an accident either even though I have gone on hunting expeditions in charge of beaters. Very often some Europeans from Jubbulpore come [464] out to our village which is close to good hunting places and I go with them and show them where they may find game.